

**From:** Hubbard, Joseph  
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**1 – Federal Investigators: Chemical Industry Has A Safety Crisis, NPR, 12/9/14**

<http://stateimpact.npr.org/texas/2014/12/09/federal-investigators-chemical-industry-has-a-safety-crisis/>

It's been a tragic couple of years for some people who work around dangerous chemicals in Texas. "Fertilizer plant on fire, there was an explosion; we have several buildings that have been destroyed," said a dispatcher to first responders headed to a fertilizer business in the city of West. It was on the evening of April 17, 2013. Ten volunteer firefighters would be among the 15 people killed by the explosion.

**2 - Fired: Texas regulators say they tried to enforce rules, lost jobs, Center for Public Integrity, 12/9/14**

[http://www.publicintegrity.org/2014/12/09/16391/fired-texas-regulators-say-they-tried-enforce-rules-lost-jobs?utm\\_source=email&utm\\_campaign=watchdog&utm\\_medium=publici-email&goal=0\\_ffd1d0160d-d4992ccc29-100287913&mc\\_cid=d4992ccc29&mc\\_eid=b43bbe1a9f](http://www.publicintegrity.org/2014/12/09/16391/fired-texas-regulators-say-they-tried-enforce-rules-lost-jobs?utm_source=email&utm_campaign=watchdog&utm_medium=publici-email&goal=0_ffd1d0160d-d4992ccc29-100287913&mc_cid=d4992ccc29&mc_eid=b43bbe1a9f)

During their careers as oil and gas inspectors for the Texas Railroad Commission, Fred Wright and Morris Kocurek earned merit raises, promotions and praise from their supervisors. They went about their jobs — keeping tabs on the conduct of the state's most important industry — with gusto. But they may have done their jobs too well for the industry's taste — and for their own agency's.

**3 - Louisiana has ambitious \$50B plan to fight wetlands erosion, but will it work?, Advocate, 12/09/14**

<http://theadvocate.com/news/acadiana/11044131-123/louisiana-has-ambitious-50b-plan>

As Brig. Gen. Duke DeLuca wrapped up his 32-year career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in August, he contemplated the key to Louisiana's massive, 50-year, \$50 billion effort to prevent the southeastern portion of the state from being swallowed by the Gulf of Mexico. DeLuca, an expert on the many threats facing the coast, said: "It will take a moon-shot type of investment in the science."

**4 - Spending bill would slice budget, staff, EE News, 12/10/14**

<http://www.eenews.net/eedaily/2014/12/10/stories/1060010268>

U.S. EPA would see its budget trimmed and its workforce squeezed even further if the massive spending bill unveiled last night by congressional negotiators is enacted this week. The spending bill would fund EPA at \$8.1 billion in fiscal 2015. That's \$60 million less than EPA received in fiscal 2014, but \$250 million more than the Obama administration asked for in its 2015 budget request.

**5 – Parishes surrounding Baton Rouge could struggle to meet EPA's proposed, tough ozone levels, Advocate, , 12/8/14**

<http://theadvocate.com/news/10991679-123/parishes-surrounding-baton-rouge-could>

Not much will change for the five-parish Baton Rouge area if a proposed new, tougher ozone standard announced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in late November is adopted. The EPA proposed a new rule that would lower the ozone standard from 75 parts per billion to between 65 ppb and 70 ppb. The agency also is taking comments on the possibility of lowering it to 60 ppb.

**6 – Plant expansions fueled by shale gas boom to boost greenhouse gas, toxic air emissions, Center for Public Integrity, 12/10/14**

[http://www.publicintegrity.org/2014/12/10/16389/plant-expansions-fueled-shale-gas-boom-boost-greenhouse-gas-toxic-emissions?utm\\_source=email&utm\\_campaign=watchdog&utm\\_medium=publici-email&goal=0\\_ffd1d0160d-023faf11bf-100287913&mc\\_cid=023faf11bf&mc\\_eid=b43bbe1a9f](http://www.publicintegrity.org/2014/12/10/16389/plant-expansions-fueled-shale-gas-boom-boost-greenhouse-gas-toxic-emissions?utm_source=email&utm_campaign=watchdog&utm_medium=publici-email&goal=0_ffd1d0160d-023faf11bf-100287913&mc_cid=023faf11bf&mc_eid=b43bbe1a9f)

Stacey Ryan already knows where he'll be buried. It will be in Perkins Cemetery, the same place his mother and father were laid to rest after dying from cancer. It's where his aunts, uncles, grandfather and great-grandfather are interred, having been felled by various malignancies, diabetes, and ailments of the heart, respiratory system and pancreas. Most of Ryan's family is there, along with almost everyone else who ever died in Mossville, an unincorporated area founded by freed slaves.

#### **7 - Udall 'disappointed' over WIPP leak, ABQ Journal, 12/10/14**

<http://www.abqjournal.com/508030/news/udall-disappointed-over-leak.html>

U.S. Sen. Tom Udall says he's disappointed with the federal Department of Energy and its contractors over the radiation leak that shut down the nation's nuclear waste dump near Carlsbad. But on Tuesday he stopped short of support for dumping the contractors that run the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant and Los Alamos National Laboratory, which packaged the waste drum that ruptured in February and contaminated WIPP.

#### **8 - Safe and sensible, Beaumont Enterprise, 12/8/14**

<http://www.beaumontenterprise.com/opinion/editorials/article/Safe-and-sensible-5943694.php>

Last month, the Eagle Ford Shale formation produced its billionth barrel of oil, according to analysts at the research firm Wood Mackenzie as reported by Chronicle reporter Ryan Holeywell ("Eagle Ford yields billionth barrel" Page D1, Dec. 5). A process called "fracking" - injecting liquid into rock to force open fissures - accounts for much of this yield.

#### **9 - U.S., Mexico Need to Address Sewage, Report Says, BNA, 12/9/14**

[http://news.bna.com/deln/DELNWB/split\\_display.adp?fedfid=60241530&vname=dennotallissues&id=a0g0b5e7m4&split=0](http://news.bna.com/deln/DELNWB/split_display.adp?fedfid=60241530&vname=dennotallissues&id=a0g0b5e7m4&split=0)

The U.S. and Mexican governments need to address sewage disposal, wastewater treatment and irrigation practices, including excessive withdrawals of water in national and binational waters, as part of a joint effort to restore the ecosystems found along the 1,954-mile border that the two countries share, according to the Good Neighbor Environmental Board's 16th annual report to Congress, released Dec. 9.

#### **10 - Deadly Texas blast shows need for volunteer firefighter training -- NIOSH, EE News, 12/9/14**

<http://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2014/12/09/stories/1060010232>

The 10 emergency response officials who died on the job while trying to extinguish a blaze at a fertilizer storage facility in West, Texas, last year didn't understand how dangerous a situation they had gotten into, according to a recent occupational safety report on the incident.

#### **11 - Senate passes FOIA bill, Politico, 12/8/14**

<http://www.politico.com/story/2014/12/senate-passes-foia-bill-113403.html>

One of the last acts of retiring Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) was holding up a broadly supported bill to reform the Freedom of Information Act, warning Friday that it could harm consumer protections.

Over the weekend, transparency advocates and bill supporters stirred, pushing Rockefeller to change his mind. And on Monday, as Congress' lame duck session drew to a close, he relented.

#### **12 - Scientist with deep industry ties being considered for key EPA job, Center for Public Integrity, 12/9/14**

[http://www.publicintegrity.org/2014/12/09/16392/scientist-deep-industry-ties-being-considered-key-epa-job?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed:+publici\\_rss+\(The+Center+for+Public+Integrity+Latest+Stories\)](http://www.publicintegrity.org/2014/12/09/16392/scientist-deep-industry-ties-being-considered-key-epa-job?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+publici_rss+(The+Center+for+Public+Integrity+Latest+Stories))

A scientist with deep ties to the chemical industry is one of two finalists to lead the office at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that determines which chemicals can make people sick, and in what doses. Michael Dourson is being considered to direct the Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS), whose scientific reports are used by the EPA and states to draft regulations to rid air, water or soil of toxic chemicals.

**13- Louisiana restoration projects should get top priority with BP oil spill fine money, environmental groups say, Times Picayune, 12/9/14**

[http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2014/12/bp\\_oil\\_spill\\_money\\_projects.html#incart\\_river](http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2014/12/bp_oil_spill_money_projects.html#incart_river)

Rebuilding Louisiana's coast, including the rapidly eroding Mississippi River delta, should be the main use of billions of dollars in expected BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill fine and restoration money, according to two reports released Tuesday by the National Wildlife Federation and a coalition of national and Louisiana environmental groups.

**14- Oklahoma AG Scott Pruitt Says 'Alliance' With Energy Industry Wasn't Secret, State Impact, 12/9/14**

<http://stateimpact.npr.org/oklahoma/2014/12/09/oklahoma-ag-scott-pruitt-says-alliance-with-energy-industry-wasnt-secret/>

Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt confirmed Monday that he has worked with the energy industry to push back against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Obama administration's regulatory agenda, but denied how The New York Times characterized those efforts, which were detailed in a story published over the weekend. Pruitt's alliance with energy companies isn't a secret at all, basically.

**15- Railroaded by the Railroad Commission in Denton, Observer, 12/9/14**

<http://www.texasobserver.org/railroad-commission-denton-fracking-ban/>

The exhilaration my neighbors and I felt on election night after Denton's referendum to ban fracking passed by an overwhelming majority lasted about 12 hours or so. But by the next morning Denton was under assault—not only from the oil and gas industry, but from Austin bureaucrats and politicians. The city was slammed with lawsuits from the Texas Oil and Gas Association and the Texas General Land Office, now headed by George Prescott Bush. In true "Bush Doctrine" fashion, the lawsuits seek the preemption of Denton's democratic process, attempting to halt the ban's enforcement before it began.